

BRITISH

GO

JOURNAL

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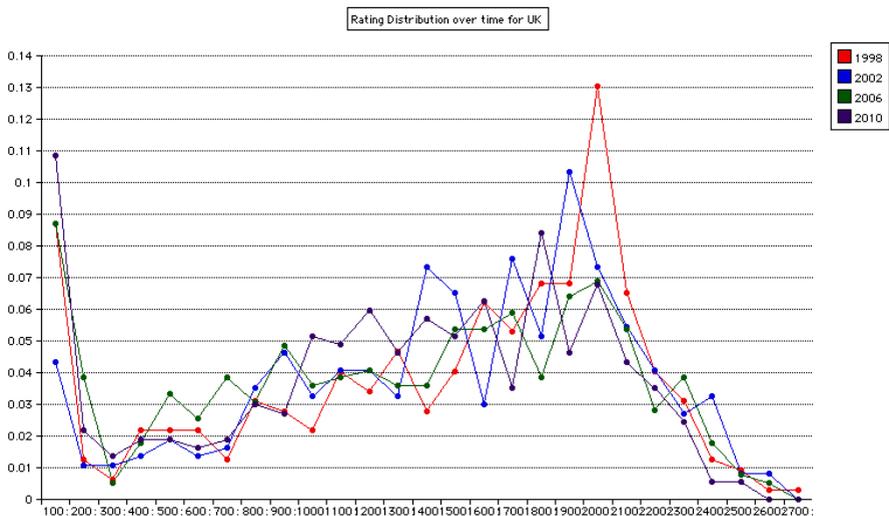
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Proportion of all UK players versus European Rating Points.

**Are we getting weaker? See article in this issue.**

## PHOTO AND SCAN CREDITS

Front Cover - Vanessa Wong (see World News): Paul Smith

Above: Ian Davis.

Inside Rear - Go Postcards: Tony Atkins.

Rear Cover: Tony Atkins.

Winners of the Irish Open (in World News): Tiberiu Gociu.

Chris Bradford provided the photo of himself for the review of "Young Samurai: The Ring of Water".

The remaining photos were kindly provided by the article authors.

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# EDITORIAL

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Welcome to the 155<sup>th</sup> British Go Journal.

## In This Issue

Among the items in this issue we have the first of a new series of articles from Guoru Ding, Theo van Ees and Franco Pratesi on the history of Go, including activity in London around 1928. We also have the second part of David Ward's Problem Corner and an article by Matthew Macfadyen on critical moments in the 2010 British Championship match.

We include a number of items of BGA business this time: news of a survey of Go clubs which is being organized by Jenny Radcliffe; a summary of recent improvements to the BGA website, by Jon Diamond; and the new arrangements in place for BGA members to buy books and equipment at discounted prices are described by Toby Manning.

We have two software and two book reviews. The books are fiction, rather than Go books as such, but are from popular adult and children's authors and, as with the game for the Xbox 360, have the potential to stimulate interest by the wider public and bring many new Go players.

## Tsunami

It is just a few weeks ago that the east coast of Japan was struck by a devastating earthquake and tsunami, from which it will no doubt take the country years to recover fully. Some Go tournaments abroad have elected to donate their proceeds to relief funds. Here in the UK, the British Youth Go Championship has done the same (and perhaps others by the time you read this). The BGA website provides links to the relief funds organised by the Japanese Ambassador and the British Red Cross.

## Apology

In the last issue we failed to report that, in addition to Pandanet and Winton Capital Management, the London Open was sponsored by the Nippon Club, as it has been for many years. Our sincere apologies to the Nippon Club for this omission. We are most grateful for their generous support for this event.

## Credits

My grateful thanks to the many people who have helped by proof-reading the drafts, providing technical help and, not least, by contributing articles and photographs: to our anonymous problemist and our anonymous cartoonist, to Tony Atkins, Bill Brakes, David Carter-Hitchin, Barry Chandler, Ian Davis, Jon Diamond, Guoru Ding, Theo van Ees, Glynn Forsythe, Martin Harvey, David Carter-Hitchin, Geoff Kaniuk, Matthew Macfadyen, Toby Manning, Neil Moffatt, Franco Pratesi, Jenny Radcliffe, Isobel Ridley, Francis Roads, Paul Smith, Edmund Stephen-Smith, David Ward and Nick Wedd.

*Pat Ridley*

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## PRELIMINARY CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS TO A CONFERENCE ON THE INFLUENCE OF GO IN INTERNATIONAL HISTORY, ART, LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, POLITICS, PEACE, WARFARE AND MORE

We are trying to determine the feasibility of an international academic conference at the 2012 Go Congress in North Carolina for a few days sometime between August 4 and August 11. This would expand on the highly successful one held in Sweden in 2008 ([egc2008.eu/en/events/symposium.php](http://egc2008.eu/en/events/symposium.php)). We will be looking for sponsors, but first we need to know how many people would be interested in presenting papers if expenses were

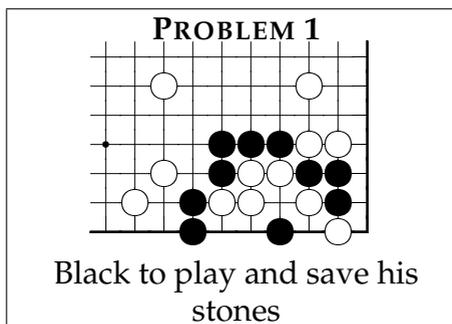
- a) fully funded
- b) partially funded (in terms of amount)
- c) not at all, except for room and board for the days of the conference.

Please write to me at the email address below, and mention possible topics and what travel expenses might be incurred.

Thank you,

**Peter Shotwell and Paul Celmer**

[pshotwell@gmail.com](mailto:pshotwell@gmail.com)



# VIEW FROM THE TOP

Jon Diamond

president@britgo.org



After our initial win in the Pandanet Go European Team Championship we've not managed to do very well. However, we were playing the teams nominally rated above us, so that's explainable. We're now moving on to play the lower-rated teams, so it looks like at least we're not going to be relegated (phew)!

Last time I talked vaguely about the replacement of our book-selling operation. I'm glad to say that we have negotiated a discount arrangement with our previous wholesaler, Pentangle Puzzles and Games, for which details are on the website. This is the subject of a separate article (on page 39). Sadly, this won't involve a knowledgeable person and books at many tournaments though ... We're still discussing how we might provide something for people at tournaments to be able to look at.

There have been more changes to our website to make it more useful to you, and the world in general, but again that's the subject of a separate article (on page 29), summarising what's

been happening over the past year or so.

Council is changing, and not just the membership at the AGM. We're planning to meet slightly less often face to face, but to have conference calls (hopefully video ones) in between times—this should mean that we ensure actions are progressed more swiftly.

We are probably also going to be re-organising the Committee and regional structures, which aren't working optimally. Do you have any suggestions for changes? Ideas are certainly welcome—just talk to any Council member about what's happening or send me an email.

I'd like to be able to talk about the World Mind Sports Games in Manchester in 2012, but as I write things are still up in the air and no contract is signed yet. Hopefully, they'll be clearer by the time you actually read this.

We're offering to help the IGF organise side events to provide marketing for Go in general in the UK and, using the fantastic players who will be coming, improving the skills of our members through teaching events and so on. Obviously we'll announce anything definite as soon as we know, since we assume that the organisers will want us to help in some fashion.

Don't forget: watch this space and the website for updates on everything that's going on. Much of what we do is also announced on the gotalk discussion group.

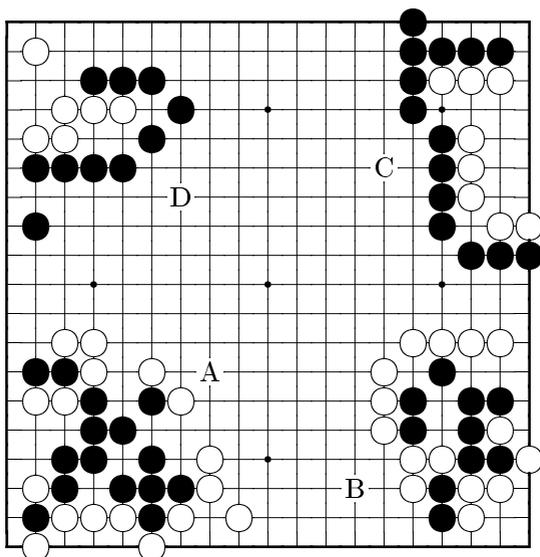
I hope to see many of you in Malmesbury and one of the other tournaments later this year.

# DAVID WARD'S PROBLEM CORNER—PART 2

David Ward

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Following the theme from last time, here are four more problems for you to have a go at. In all instances, it is Black to play and the groups either live or die unconditionally (i.e. no ko's).



A and B are fairly easy; for C you might need to apply a little of Sherlock Holmes logic—"Eliminate all other factors, and the one which remains must be the truth"—and problem D is a bit of a stinker.

I would recommend that you try without using a board. If you are stuck then try again with a board.

Hints for solving this set of problems can be found on page 28; the solutions are on page 41.

# UK NEWS

Tony Atkins

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## British Championship

On Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> January, Matthew Macfadyen beat Vanessa Wong in the fourth game of the 2010 British Championship match. The first game had been won by Vanessa back in September, held at her school, Concord near Shrewsbury. Matthew however won the next three, held alternately at Matthew's home in Barford Warwickshire and at Concord. Matthew was therefore the 2010 British Champion, champion for the 24<sup>th</sup> time.

## Maidenhead

As usual the first tournament of the year was Maidenhead on 22<sup>nd</sup> January. Not usual was the dropping of the Furze Platt name and replacing it by Hitachi. It is, besides, more than 15 years since the tournament left Furze Platt school and moved to the Hitachi Europe headquarters building. Again, Hitachi provided a super venue and a buffet lunch for the 56 players taking part. Andrew Simons (3d) from Cambridge was the winner, winning the tie-break that separated the top players on two wins. Second was Tom Brand (3d) from Reading and third was Nick Krempel (3d) from London. Winning three out of three were David Ward (2d), Baron Allday (1k), David Hall (8k), Pat Ridley (11k) and, from Prague, Jan Poslusny (9k). The DAGG team from Cambridge won the team prize but, due to lack of interest, nobody won the 13x13 prize.

## Edinburgh Christmas

The Edinburgh Christmas Open was postponed from a very snowy

December to a milder 5<sup>th</sup> February. It saw a slightly reduced turnout at 33 players. Having earlier been presented with the 2010 Scottish Championship trophy, David Lee (2d) from Dundee also triumphed on the day. Runners up on three out of four were Andrew Kay (4d) and Matthew Scott (2d), both up from England. Also receiving prizes for three wins were Durham's Jenny Radcliffe (4k) and Andrew Bate (10k), Finland's Eevi Korhonen (7k), and locals Rob Payne (9k) and William Grayson (12k). The 2011 Scottish Championship semi-finals were decided to be David Lee against Martha McGill and Piotr Wisthal against Glynn Forsythe.

## Cheshire

The Cheshire tournament on 12<sup>th</sup> February was rather small this year, thanks to a clash with the Manchester football derby and other factors, but much enjoyed by those who attended.



**Matt Marsh**

## Winner of the Cheshire Handicap

In fact 14 players, and 100 Chess players in the parallel tournament,

struggled their way through the road works outside Frodsham Community Centre to take part. In the top group Alex Rix (3d) from London was the winner, beating the organiser Tony Atkins (2d) in the final. In the Handicap Section, the winner with four out of five was Matt Marsh (7k) from Sheffield. On three wins were Brian and Kathleen Timmins (9k/14k) and Reg Sayer (13k). Thanks must go to the Journal Editor and other local Go players who helped out in the kitchen over the weekend.

### **Oxford**

After a two-year gap the Oxford Tournament returned, on the same day as the Cheshire, and attracted 51 players. The venue was the same as ever, St Edmund Hall, and the dreaming spires of Oxford were as dreamy as always. Andrew Simons (3d) beat off three London players to win his second event of the year. Others winning three games were Sue Paterson (4k), Brook Roberts (6k), Peter Harold-Barry (6k), Richard Wheeldon (9k), Yulia Voevodskaya (9k) and Kieran Smith (24k). A new initiative this year was a novices' tournament held between the main rounds, but it was not clear if this experiment was successful. The bookshop and prizes were supplied as usual by Hoyle's, the local games shop.

### **Nottingham**

The eighth Nottingham tournament was held again in the University's Portland Building. This year it moved

up to the top floor into the ballroom, with its views across the park and the Trent Valley. Chong Han (5d) from Loughborough won his first UK tournament, taking it with ease. Also winning three were London's Roger Daniel (5k), the event organiser Maria Tabor (6k), David Crabtree (9k) from Chester and Andrew Russell (12k) from Birmingham. Mike Charles won the prize for the self-paired 9x9 and Toby Manning the prize for entering the fiendish quiz set by Robert Harman.

### **Trigantius**

David Ward (3d) won his local tournament, the Cambridge Trigantius, without having to share the title as he did in 2000. Thirty-six players took part this year. It was held, like last year, at St Columba's Church in the centre of the city. Three other players won all three games as well, namely Michael Charles (1k) from St Albans, Brook Roberts (4k) from Cambridge and Jan Poslusny (6k) from Prague. The continuous 13x13 competition was won by Juan Leonardo Martínez-Hurtado (12k) from Cambridge, and the animal puzzles were solved best by Patrick Batty from South London. Nine novices, including four complete beginners, attended the parallel novices' training event. No prize was awarded, because the planned tournament turned into another teaching session instead. Special commendations must go to Jack Chen, Sam Austin and Mark Slatter for their progress during the day.

# SOFTWARE REVIEW—MYGOFRIEND

Glynn Forsythe

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MyGoFriend is a strong Go-playing program for Windows with some interesting features for studying, at least for 9x9 boards. As befits the gold medallist from the 2010 Computer Olympiad, it is powerful, but limited in some ways and lacking some features which may be considered basic in other programs. It has seven pre-programmed levels of strength, beginner to sensei, which search through a certain number of games. This means its strength should be the same across different computers, although running on more powerful hardware will make it play more quickly.

The first three levels are very weak, regularly missing ladders. I found the fourth and fifth levels (club player and expert) gave a good game (I am 1k, but much more used to 19x19 than 9x9), while the sixth level was tough if it had komi and took about 20 seconds for the first few moves, then speeding up. The sensei level thought for so long I got bored. Fortunately there is a force move button, a gear icon which also rotates while the computer is thinking. Alternatively, you can limit the time the computer takes to make each move, which will also change its playing strength. Finally there is also a “permanent brain” option, which allows the program to process on your turn and should make it stronger.

What is most striking about the higher levels of play by this program is that it doesn't seem to play “computer moves”, the occasionally bizarre moves which Go programs, in my experience, seem to love. If there was a Go equivalent of the Turing test, I

suspect MyGoFriend would do very well, the one exception being that if it thinks it is losing—in common with other go programs—it will start playing pointless self-atari and other desperate moves.

The most irritating feature lacking in this program is a handicap setting (the MyGoFriend team have told me it will be in the next update). It is possible to set this up yourself however, by setting the computer colour to “none” and placing your handicap while passing for white. I only tried this a few times, but it still seemed to play sensibly. It is also restricted to 9x9 although they promise this will be expanded. Lastly, the move history is displayed as a text block of coordinates, rather than graphically. Direct access is possible by clicking on coordinates but, with several variations on one board, the list of moves quickly becomes difficult to follow.

Something I have not seen elsewhere is that the program constantly gives you its evaluation of the game, showing a percentage that represents the proportion of analysed games in which each colour wins. It is fascinating to see this number change as you work through a game. This analysis can also be done on games loaded from other sources.

In short, while not perfect, if you want an automated sparring partner across a 9x9 board you couldn't go far wrong with MyGoFriend. My computer runs at 2.25 GHz, but most relatively recent computers should be fine.

It is available for €19 from [www.mygofriend.com/en](http://www.mygofriend.com/en).

# 2010 BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP—REFLECTIONS

Matthew Macfadyen

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Some reflections on the match and what decided it.

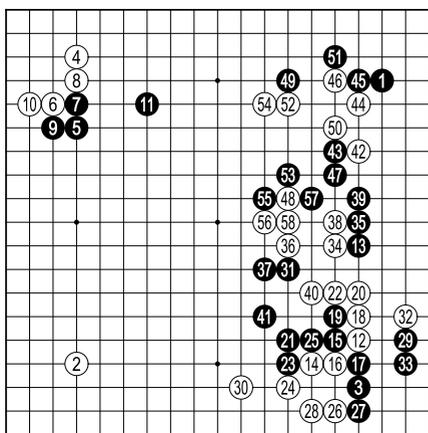
There are, occasionally, games of Go in which both sides keep their positions safe and stable throughout, and compete for territory, waiting until the endgame to discover whose is larger. The life and death of stones never becomes a major issue except indirectly.

I may have been involved in such a game somewhere in the last 45 years, but I don't remember when, and I am quite sure Vanessa Wong has played fewer of them than I have.

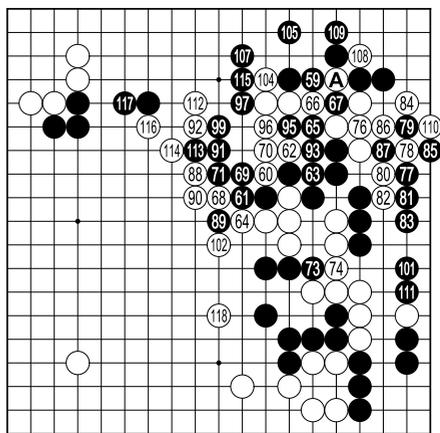
We are people who are excited by tactical possibilities; more crudely put, we play Go for fun, and fun usually means killing stones. It can also be a lot of fun looking for ingenious ways of not being dead, but counterattack is our favourite.

It is also quite nice to win when you can, and this means being as precise as possible when the game gets hot. In the final of the British Championship the players have three hours each, so that there should be time to sit on your hands for a while at important stages. Here is a whistle stop tour of the crunch points.

## Game 1



Position after move 58

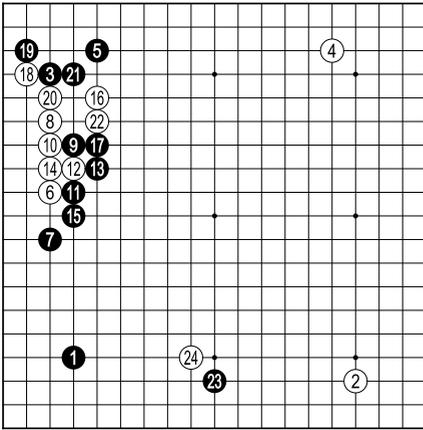


(72) at A, (75) at (67), (94) at (78), (98) at A, (100) at (67),  
(103) at (67), (106) at (78).

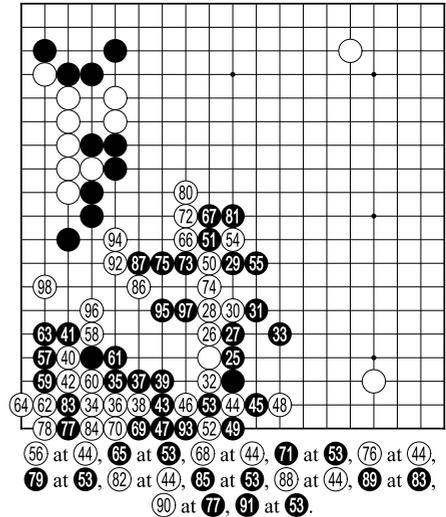
## Moves 59–118

Both sides have plenty of weak stones to attack, but it is Black's turn. I played (59), which threatens to cut the top white group in half and steals most of its eyes. Not enough; Vanessa pounced successfully by cutting at (60) (where I should have played) and by the time the fighting at the top subsided, my lower group was floating without anything to attack, and died. 1–0 to Vanessa.

## Game 2



Position after move 24

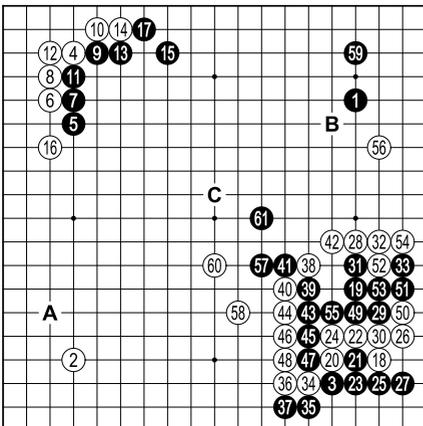


Moves 25–98

Vanessa is Black, I have just played a normal looking reducing move on the lower side. She decided to try to kill it, but this was a bit ambitious, the sequence above took me a couple of hours to find, but by the end of the diagram White has more territory in the 'black' area than Black does. 1–all.

## Game 3

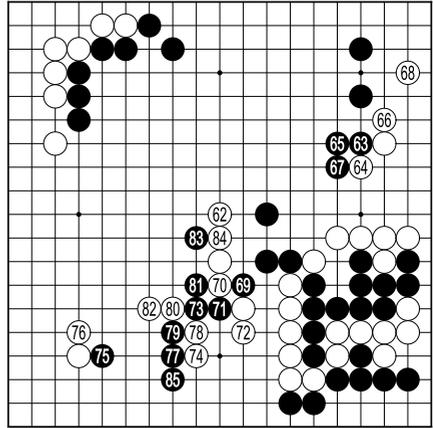
I was Black in this game. The fighting restarted a couple of times. Guo Juan thought I should have simplified things after a profitable capture in the lower right.



Position after move 61

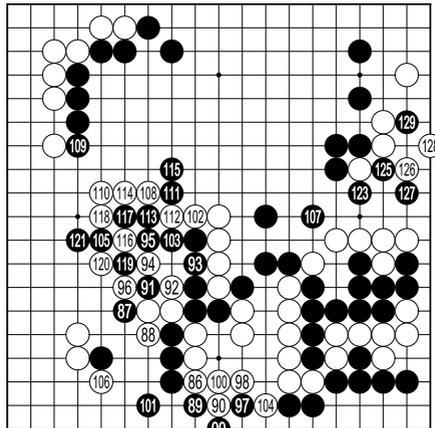
Instead of 61 I could try A, and if White plays B then I play C. This leaves White wondering where to find enough territory.

I got interested in finding things to kill and went for a rather unreasonable cut in the next diagram. Do you see how my cutting stones can now be captured cleanly?



Moves 62–85

Vanessa now found a capture, but it was too expensive. 2-1 to me.

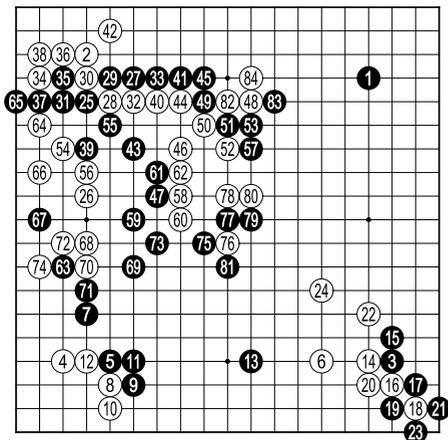


(122) at (116), (124) at (119).

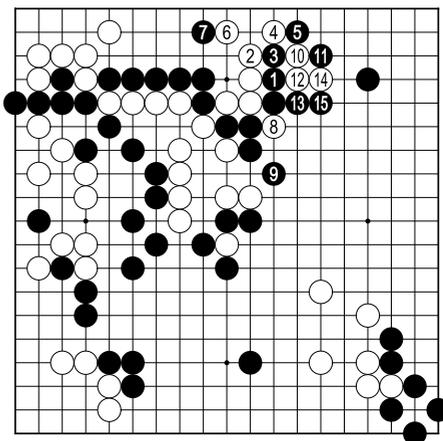
Moves 86–129

## Game 4

The fourth game came down to a big crunch at lunchtime. I had just pulled out my cutting stone with the empty triangle shown here:



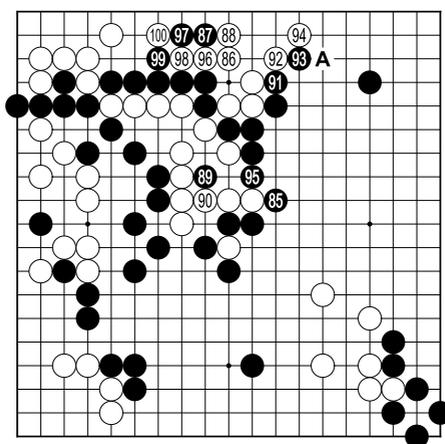
Position after move 84



Variation at move 85

Everybody seems to have failed to spot at the time that this move does not work. The variation diagram shows White's cut at 8, which tries to stop the ladder at 11 from working. But it doesn't.

Vanessa missed this chance, and found another less clear one, but it was my turn to miss the flaw. At move 100 I could simply play at A—there is no way for Black to win the capturing race (exercise for the reader).



Moves 85–100

## Conclusion

So what? Go, as played in the British Championship, is a slugging match in which the player who spots the most chances will probably win. This year I managed to be slightly better focussed at a few key points. Next year, who knows.

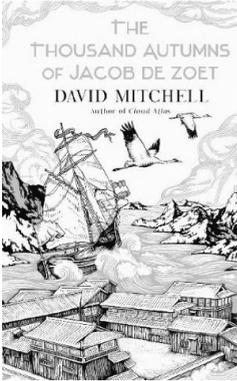
(Game 1 was reviewed in B&G 153. sgf files for all the games may be found at [www.britgo.org/bchamp/index.html](http://www.britgo.org/bchamp/index.html)—Ed.)



# BOOK REVIEW—THE THOUSAND AUTUMNS OF JACOB DE ZOET

Bill Brakes

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David Mitchell's fifth novel, "The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet", was published in May 2010 to mixed reviews. It appears that the critics, having observed the talent and potential exhibited by Mitchell<sup>1</sup> in earlier novels (perhaps most memorably in "Cloud Atlas"), are disappointed every time he fails to produce a masterpiece. Leaving such issues aside, the purpose of this review is to provide a brief commentary on the Go-playing that occurs in this novel. I shall endeavour to avoid giving away too much of the plot, for the benefit of those who have not yet read the book but may wish to do so in the future.

"The Thousand Autumns (etc.)", hereinafter referred to as TAJZ, is set in the Japan of 1799/1800. Most of the action takes place on the island of Dejima just off the port of Nagasaki. However, the Go-playing occurs on

mainland Japan. There are earlier incidental references to Go, but the main occurrence is in Part III which is entitled "The Master of Go".

Chapter XXX begins: "Lord Abbot Enomoto of Kyoga Domain places a white stone on the board" (p.346)<sup>2</sup>. His opponent is "Magistrate Shiroyama". We obtain some information about the progress of the game through comments that each makes. In addition, the omniscient narrator allows us to be privy to Shiroyama's thoughts. Enomoto's stone is described by his opponent as a "way-station . . . between his northern flank . . . and his eastern groups". This use of cardinal points to describe areas of the board occurs throughout this passage and also elsewhere in TAJZ. It is not used in modern day commentaries. I do not know whether their use at this date is historically accurate<sup>3</sup>. Apparently commenting on his position, Shiroyama ponders: "Where is the hidden way . . . to reverse my reverses?" (p.346). Later, "Shiroyama threatens Enomoto's isolated stone by placing it in atari" (p.349). The developing game serves as a background to a conversation between the men. There are no details to allow the reader to discern who is in the ascendancy in the game. Towards the end of the chapter, Shiroyama observes: "If only this

<sup>1</sup> Almost certainly not the Go-playing David Mitchell who wrote 'Go Proverbs', on grounds of age if nothing else.

<sup>2</sup> Page numbers refer to the paperback edition of the novel, published by Sceptre (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Of course, such terminology is used in many other games, most notably Mah Jongg.

world was a clean board of lines and intersections. If only time was a sequence of considered moves and not a chaos of slippages and blunders" (p.350). The game is interrupted by the arrival of news favourable to Shiroyama. "My temporary reverses ... are reversed", he observes (p.351).

The climax of TAJZ occurs in chapter XXXIX, the final chapter of Part III. It again involves interaction between the protagonists Enomoto and Shiroyama; they resume (and complete) their Go game as the final stages of their conflict are enacted and resolution achieved. It is Enomoto who is the victor. We see the final stages of the game from Shiroyama's perspective. He appears to be attempting to connect groups and at one stage claims his "bridge is only three stones from completion" (p.446). Shiroyama fears that his "dominant empire [will be] ... split into three paltry fiefdoms." Then "the bridge is just two intersections away: Shiroyama claims one ... and Enomoto places a White stone on the other" (p.446). Shortly after, both players estimate the final score: "The Abbot makes it eight points in White's favour; Shiroyama puts Enomoto's margin of victory at eight and a half points" (p.447).

Overall, the descriptions of the game-play are rather weak, as the above examples demonstrate. I do not know how much Mitchell knows about Go. His narrator appears to be an observer of the game rather than a player. Thus many of the comments on the game do not ring true to a Go-player, although quite conceivably reflect how a game might appear to one with some knowledge of the mechanics of the game, but little practical experience. In particular, although we are not told the komi in the Enomoto/Shiroyama game, that they could differ by half a point in

their score estimates is clearly an error.

Taking a wider view, the technical details of the game of Go as presented in TAJZ are probably less crucial than the thematic role the game plays in the novel. It serves as a metaphor at a number of levels. Most obviously, the interaction between Enomoto and Shiroyama both reflects and is reflected by the flow of the game. The text is perhaps overly explicit in the way it presents this. For example, after the game Shiroyama says "you saw through my offensive on the Go board, but overlooked this simple stratagem" (p.450): perhaps that is a bit crude. Rather more interesting is that the game of Go can be seen to stand as a symbolic representation of the wider themes of the novel. TAJZ presents a vivid contrast between the closed Japanese society of that historical period and the outward-looking trading/colonising instincts of the Dutch and the British. At the same time, similarities between these societies emerge repeatedly: both eastern and western cultures are seen to be strongly hierarchical, corrupt and yet possessing a humanitarian essence. The game of Go is a game of sharing in which aggressive interaction is incidental rather than a primary aim. It is therefore uniquely placed to reflect these subtleties: it encompasses conflict and opposition, yet does so within a venture that is epitomised by balance and symmetry.

I enjoyed the novel, for reasons unconnected with the portrayal of Go. Provided Go-players approach the novel prepared to be tolerant of minor errors in the presentation of the game, the fine plotting, the careful characterisation and the stylish language provide what I consider to be a highly readable and enjoyable novel. I recommend it.

# WHY AM I GETTING WEAKER?

Toby Manning

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Back in 1996 I was 3 dan, but today I am finding it difficult to avoid my grade falling to 1 dan: am I getting weaker? Or is there another explanation?

I am not unique. Many other greybeards have seen a similar effect: indeed it was the esteemed Francis Roads who first acknowledged this effect when he demoted himself from 4 dan to 3 dan about 5 years ago. Since then there has been a flood of players apparently getting weaker.

Our younger readers will probably look at my age and mutter “senility”. Indeed, while the number of grotesque blunders that I make is increasing, I do not believe this is the entire explanation: I feel stronger than I was 15 years ago.

Before the widespread adoption of the European Rating System we had a “ratchet” system: once you achieved a grade, you kept it. Dan gradings were controlled by the BGA Grading Committee, although there was a “secret list” covering a small number of players who were considered over-graded, either due to senility or because their promotion was afterwards considered to be a mistake. Indeed, on a personal basis 20 years ago I was informally known as “the test for 2d”—if you could not beat me, you were not 2d!

The European Rating System changed all that. Players are now penalised for losing games in a way that they were not in the old system; in all tournament games the winner gains points, while the loser loses (a different number of) points. Some games increase the net points and some decrease net points. Overall the effect is a net increase in the total points in the system, but it is not clear that this net addition is enough.

The table below (for which I am indebted to Geoff Kaniuk) gives the injection of rating points into the system for even game matches between players of different grades. In each row, the player beats an opponent whose grade varies from two stones stronger to two stones weaker. Please bear in mind the approximate relationship that 100 points = 1 stone (or grade difference) of strength.

Player strength	Relative strength of opponent				
	2 stones stronger	1 stone stronger	Same strength	1 stone weaker	2 stones weaker
15k	8.9	4.6	1.4	-0.5	-1.1
6k	7.2	3.4	0.8	-0.6	-0.8
1k	5.6	2.6	0.4	-0.5	-0.5
2d	5.6	2.5	0.3	-0.5	-0.5



# THE KGS RATING SYSTEM—SOME COMMENTS

Neil Moffatt

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The principal problem with any rating system for Go is the lack of anchor or reference points. At the beginner end, players seldom stay at 30k for long, as they rapidly gain substantial leverage against subsequent newcomers they encounter. At the top end, there is a kind of anchor (but not reference point) in the 9d rank<sup>1</sup>. Those players who reach this level should, in effect, be exploitable as an anchor point—they should be deemed to have plateaued in ability.

But basing a rating system at the top end of the distribution of ranks is dangerous because the population there is small. Much better to normalise on the point where the largest number of players reside. Ignoring the artificial peak around 20k, this is around 2k in the UK currently (see graph inside the front cover), but the use of the 1k/1d boundary would be most meaningful. If we could determine some timeless mechanism for determining whether a player has reached 1d standard, then the ranking system could evolve above and below this reference point using an algorithm that does not use any arbitrary inflation mechanisms.

Without any absolute reference, the use of relative references is always going to introduce distortions. This is most clearly evident on the KGS Go Server, where two additional factors serve to damage matters further.

First, the upper limit 9d rank is also occupied by a number of professional players, thereby making it a lot harder

for lower ranked amateur dan players to get to 9d.

Second, the algorithm used to determine player ranks does not work on a game-by-game points lost/gained basis, but on a rolling, weighted, 180-day calculation. A beginner who loses many games in the first few weeks as he finds his feet will later learn that these will hold back his advancement when he improves. Such a time-based rather than games-based ranking system is heavily biased against newcomers, whose rapid improvement over a period of just a few months is sluggishly tracked by KGS. Just as potently, if players play many rated games each day, the sheer weight of games in a 180-day period will seriously slow their rate of rank advancement. Many times I have seen players complain that ten straight wins has not yielded a single rank promotion. A net effect is that any one rank can see wildly differing player abilities.

Even if a reliable 1d assessment were to be introduced, however, the practicalities involved would make its administration very difficult. But it would solve the problem that Toby has<sup>2</sup>. In the meantime, we appear stuck with compromises; not so long ago, there was a mass raising of KGS ranks because they had slipped too far as a result, I believe, of the deflationary nature of the time-based algorithm.

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<sup>1</sup>The highest amateur rank in the EGF Rating System is 8d, and 9d in the KGS system, though KGS graphs can indicate higher strengths.

<sup>2</sup>See preceding article "Why Am I Getting Weaker?"

# LIU GUANG-HAN TEACHES GO

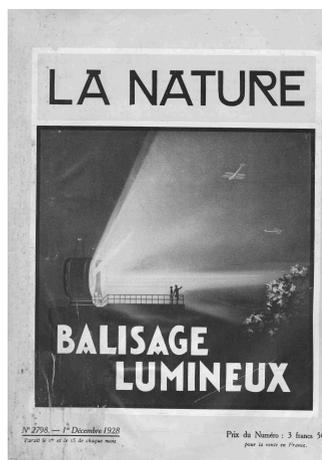
Theo van Ees, Guoru Ding, Franco Pratesi franco.pratesi@alice.it

This article (the first of a new series) reports new information on several historical points mentioned in the book Eurogo Vol. 1, written by Franco Pratesi with help from Klaus Heine, Theo van Ees, and Guoru Ding for the part on Shu Tong.

The starting point of this study is a series of articles on Go that appeared in Holland in 1929. These were discussed in Eurogo (pp. 284-285). As the Dutch series did not mention the author, we speculated that the writer could be someone in the Dutch diplomatic service. This hypothesis can now be shown to be wrong: Theo van Ees, who introduced these articles, has recently found that the series had been written by Commandant Lancelin and was first published in France in the popular science magazine *La Nature*. This was in 1928 and 1929, a few months before the publication of the Dutch translations. This discovery also solved the problem of the unfindable articles from *La Nature* published in 1880, which were mentioned in a fundamental bibliography by Craig Hutchinson (see Eurogo, pp. 100-101); it is now obvious that this date was incorrect.

Of course we would like to know more about this Commandant Lancelin, and Theo van Ees has found some information that will be published in a later part of this series. We have not found any report on his stay in Japan, however he states clearly that he had been there. He was familiar with the Japanese way of life and—most important for us—with the Go environment. His account of observing Japanese clerks while playing is rather impressive. Firstly, he was surprised by their great addiction to the game: at work, when

the boss was away, the clerks took out their game sets and played, ready to put all the equipment away quickly when the boss came back. Even more surprising for any European observer was how they were able to reconstruct exactly the complex board position of any interrupted game.



According to Commandant Lancelin, people learn the game in a traditional way, from one teacher over the course of many years. The whole learning process consists of learning by heart sequences of moves that are useful in a given position on the board. When the player finds the same position in a game, he knows at once how to play, without any reflection. There is no knowledge of general strategic principles; only tactics are taught. "In Japan there is a true brotherhood of Go professionals, who earn their

living by giving lessons for money, and maintain their fame in public contests, of which the results are of great significance for them. Repeated victories allow them to increase both the number of their students and the price of their lessons. Thanks to these professionals, Go has kept this half-secret character, discouraging Europeans from fathoming its mysteries. This fostered the image of Go as a very difficult game, whose practice requires long study under the direction of excellent teachers. They take great care never to explain the general principles in their lessons, as Mr. Ly did for us, but restrict themselves to the teaching of specific moves. This mode of education has the advantage that it can be protracted indefinitely. It is a common belief that one can study Go for twenty years and still have much to learn. This is so because the very large number of moves allows an almost infinite variety of combinations." (La Nature, 1929, nr. 2802, p. 130).

Commandant Lancelin tells us that he learned to play with this Japanese method, but then something exceptional occurred: he found a young Chinese man in London who was a much stronger player and used a new teaching method. His teaching was much more suitable for a European player, who looks for logic and general principles rather than learning a lot of moves by heart.

Here is the actual report on this event, directly translated from the French article (La Nature, 1929, nr. 2800, p. 34).

"We have to apologize to the Japanese readers of La Nature for having used a radically different method to teach our European countrymen the principles of the game of Go. The Chinese

revolution is to blame for this. We had begun to take Go lessons in Japan, and we reached the strength of a player who had been studying for six months when we met Mr. Ly. [...]

UN JEU NATIONAL JAPONAIS 819

LE JEU DE "GO"

De temps en temps les Japonais se livrent à la pratique de ce jeu si intéressant, si utile, si varié, si riche. Il consiste à placer des pierres sur un plateau carré qui est divisé en carrés par des lignes horizontales et verticales. Les pierres sont placées sur les intersections de ces lignes. Le jeu se joue sur un plateau carré qui est divisé en carrés par des lignes horizontales et verticales. Les pierres sont placées sur les intersections de ces lignes. Le jeu se joue sur un plateau carré qui est divisé en carrés par des lignes horizontales et verticales. Les pierres sont placées sur les intersections de ces lignes.



Fig. 1. — Le jeu de Go. — Un joueur habillé habituellement.

PRINCIPES

Voilà le principe de ce jeu. Le plateau est divisé en carrés par des lignes horizontales et verticales. Les pierres sont placées sur les intersections de ces lignes. Le jeu se joue sur un plateau carré qui est divisé en carrés par des lignes horizontales et verticales. Les pierres sont placées sur les intersections de ces lignes.

Fig. 2. — Les cases vides et les cases occupées par les pierres.



Mr. Ly was a young dinner-jacket wearing Chinese man, attaché to the Chinese Republic's embassy in London. Seeing us with a game of Go in our hands, he offered to play a game and, with a smile, captured all the stones placed by us on the board, without any exception. Then he began to talk and, in one hour of conversation, made us understand the object of the game and its strategy much better than our Japanese professor had succeeded in doing.

Today we present the fruits of this conversation to the readers of La Nature. Mr. Ly was certainly revolutionary, and his explanations of Go were also perhaps a little so. For what it is worth, they seem much more accessible to the European brain than the traditional rules of play.

For Mr. Ly, the tactics of the game of Go are summed up in four principles.

1. One must surround (the opponent).
2. One must get out (of the enclosures set around).
3. One must cut (the enemy lines).
4. One must connect (his own pieces in rows).

It is exceedingly simple, but implementation is not always easy, and it is possible, even after one understands these principles very well, to be crushed by the least Japanese bank employee who, without caring about understanding, will put each of his pieces as his teacher has taught him."

As indicated above for Commandant Lancelin, we would also like to know more about this revolutionary Mr. Ly. The Republic of China was established in 1912, after the Qing Dynasty was overthrown in 1911, and its government was controlled by the Northern Warlords from 1912 to 1928; the capital was then Beijing, the old name of Beijing. In Chinese history this is usually called the Beijing Government (1912-1928). During the Northern Expedition (1926-1927), the Northern Army was defeated. After that, China was controlled by the Southern power, and the government was moved to Nanjing in Southern China until 1949. Mr. Ly was probably sent to London by the Beijing Government (1912-1928).

A name with the French spelling 'Ly' may correspond to several Chinese family names. The Department of Foreign Affairs published 82 issues of the official 'Foreign Affairs Bulletin (FAB)' from July 1921 to April 1928. Guoru Ding studied those and found that there was only one person whose family name started with the letter

L ever assigned to London. His full name is Liu Guang-Han.

Liu was first assigned as an attaché to the Chinese Embassy in Vienna, Austria, on January 27, 1926 (FAB No.57, March 1926), and he was transferred to the General Consulate in London for counsellor training on April 7, 1926 (FAB No.59, May 1926). Finally, he was transferred to the Chinese Embassy in London as an attaché on September 26, 1927 (FAB No.75, September 1927). There is no other information about him.

Liu Guang-Han is a very popular name, because both characters Guang and Han are very common in Chinese. A Google search gets more than 37,000 hits, so it is hard to find useful information; a search in the archives of the Institute of Modern History in Taiwan, Academia Sinica, produced no results.

At that time, Liu Guang-Han was not the only one in London to show interest in teaching Go to foreigners. It is impossible not to think of Shu Tong and Daniele Pecorini, who had published a book on Go in Italy in 1927 (Eurogo pp. 273-277), and then in London in 1929, with the title 'The game of Wei-chi' (Eurogo, pp. 267-270). In this book, in addition to a lot of technical information on the game (without sequences of moves to memorise), other topics such as history and bibliography are dealt with. Moreover, the game is compared with politics, with the conclusion that a larger spread of the game may even improve the conditions for promoting peace in the whole world. Further interesting new information about him has recently been found by Guoru Ding and Theo van Ees, and this will be reported in the following articles in this series.

# WORLD NEWS

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## Pandanet Go European Team Championship

As reported last time, the UK team ended up in the B League and lost its first match in November against Poland. In the December match the team managed an excellent victory by beating Belgium 3–1. The same team (Matthew Macfadyen, Jon Diamond, Des Cann and Andrew Simons) played Denmark in January, but could only manage a draw, with Jon losing his first game after two wins.

For the second January match, after some struggle with dates, they were given permission to bend the rules and play this match over two days. However they were not told in advance the price to pay would be a fine of a board point. However it got worse as Andrew Simons was the only player to win, despite players getting into winning positions.

The February match was also a disaster as Sweden insisted on playing on the match day of Tuesday, despite the UK not being able to find a full team. Jon stepped up to board one and so the team only had to pay a one point fine and not two. Andrew took board three and Paul Smith stepped in to play board four. In the end it was rather an easy four-game win for Sweden, the top team in the B League.

Their fortune recovered in the first match in March against Croatia. Team Captain Will Brooks lost, but Matthew, Andrew and Nick Krempel all won. With the season two thirds complete, this win puts the UK in a much safer position for avoiding relegation.

## World Student

The ninth World Student Oza was played in Tokyo during the first two days of March. The European players had qualified through playing on Pandanet, and joined a field of 16 players from around the world. Both Nikola Mitic of Serbia and Jan Simara of Czechia had two wins to place sixth and eighth, which made up for Jan missing the previous event after qualifying. The European female player, Marika Dubiel from Poland, was 15<sup>th</sup>, winning one game. As usual one of the big Asian countries won the tournament; this time it was Korea, represented by Ham Youngwoo.

## Irish Open

As usual, March saw the big Irish Go weekend, this year the first weekend of the month. This year was especially big, with large numbers of players coming from mainland Europe to take part, but only a handful from the UK. In fact 62 players took part in the Open, a new record. They were attracted by the event being a Pandanet Super in the final Pandanet Go European Cup, and of course by the social life of being in Dublin. As well as trips to local hostels and the Teachers' Club bar, about half the players dined at a local Chinese on the Saturday and the ever welcoming Irish organisers invited all who could to join their annual dinner on the Sunday.

Twenty-six players congregated in the Teachers' Club on the Friday night for the Irish Rapid handicap tournament. They had to cope with the usual decreasing time limits and

the handicap-plus-one games. Best at coping was Ian Davis (1d) from Belfast. Second, losing to Ian in the fifth round, was Jan Reichelt (1k) from Germany. Also winning four were Cork's Gavin Rooney (2d) and France's Jean-Philippe Leduc (1d).



**Wei Wang and Antti Tormanen  
Joint winners of the Irish Open**

Finland's Antti Tormanen (6d) tied with Wei Wang (6d) in the Irish Open, the first time in 22 years there was no outright winner. This was Antti's fourth tournament win of the Pandanet season, which put him top in the points table with 57. Wei Wang, studying in London but being Chinese, is ineligible for Pandanet points, so the next points went to Slovakia's Lisy Pavol (5d) and Czechia's Ondrej Silt (6d) in equal third. This put Csaba Mero

and Ondrej Silt equal second in the Pandanet points table on 51. The other point places went to Willem-Koen Pomstra (5d) from the Netherlands, Juri Kuronen (5d) from Finland, Quentin Mills (3d) from the UK, Gavin Rooney (2d) from Ireland and Germany's Bernd Sambale (1d). Patrik Macek (6k) from Slovakia won all five and the following each won four: Jan Reichelt (1k) from Germany, Martin Klemsa (2k) from Czechia, Marek Fulle (4k) and Peter Kollarik (9k) from Slovakia, and Marek Gutowski (13k) from Poland.

### **European Youth**

Vanessa Wong (4d) was second at the European Youth Go Championships for the second year running. She lost, as last year, to Mateusz Surma (5d) from Poland, who retained the under-16 title. Also travelling to the beautiful setting of the lakeside Santon Hotel in Brno, Czechia, were sisters Kelda and Roella Smith, with their father Paul, from Cambridge. In the under-12s, Roella won two games at 11k to place 13<sup>th</sup> and Kelda won three at 20k to place 41<sup>st</sup>. Vladsylav Verteleckyi (3k) from Ukraine was the under-12 champion. The second place, with five wins, went to Stepan Popov (1d Russia).

There were not only 46 under-16s and 52 under-12s, but also an under-20 section and a so-called under-99 section, which were not for official titles. Slovakia's Pavol Lisy (5d) won all six games to win the under-20 section and Pal Balogh (6d Hungary) just won the under-99 section, on second tie-break from Jan Simara (5d Czechia).

# TWO 9X9 GAMES AGAINST COMPUTER PROGRAMS

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## 1. A Game Against Two Professionals

Some people say that nowadays, a good computer program (which necessarily means a Monte-Carlo-based program), running on powerful hardware, is as strong as a professional. A series of eight challenge games played on February 15<sup>th</sup> 2011 between the program MoGoTW and Taiwanese professionals suggests otherwise. The 9d and the 5d professionals won all their games, while the 1d professional won two and lost one.

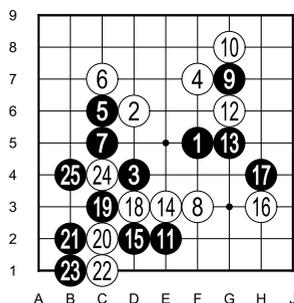
The game presented here is one of these eight<sup>1</sup>. I have chosen it because it is a renko game: as far as I am aware, this is the first ever renko game between a program and a professional renko team. Black was played by Chou Chun-Shung 9p and his brother Chou Ping-Chiang 5p, and White by MoGoTW.

MoGo was one of the first Monte-Carlo Go programs, originally developed by French programmers Sylvain Gelly and Wang Yizao; many others have contributed to it since, with a team based in Taiwan, but including Olivier Teytaud, developing it into MoGoTW. For this game MoGoTW was running on two IBM machines, with a total of 16 cores and 36GB of RAM.

The rules were Chinese, with  $7\frac{1}{2}$  komi, and time limits of 30 minutes each. The program played white, which should have given it an advantage: top-level 9x9 games with  $7\frac{1}{2}$  komi are,

more often than not, won by White.

I am not qualified to comment on this game myself, as the players are much stronger than me. I have taken the commentary below from the kibitzers of strong players who were watching the game on KGS. Martin Müller is European 5d and AGA 7d, and is the programmer of Fuego. Shih-Chieh Huang is a Taiwanese player, rated 6d on KGS, and is the programmer of Erica. Fuego and Erica are other leading Go programs.



Moves 1–25

②: “I have never seen this opening. In Fuego’s book, after ① at F5 White plays ② at D5 and Black has no move with good winning percentage.”—Martin Müller.

②②: “E4 [instead of C1] is the only chance.”—Shih-Chieh Huang.

②④: “Fuego also likes C4, a kind of horizon/desperation effect.”—Martin Müller.

<sup>1</sup>For the others, see [www.computer-go.info/h-c/index.html](http://www.computer-go.info/h-c/index.html)

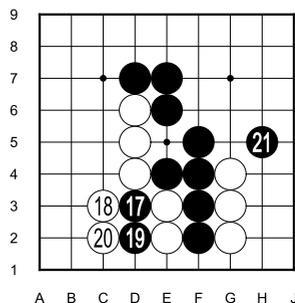
To expand on the last comment: I have observed that when a Monte-Carlo program makes an obviously pointless, but forcing, move like 24, it always goes on to lose the game. This happens because a kikashi like 24 increases uncertainty about who will win (by making the end of the game slightly more remote), while it only slightly reduces winning chances—so if the winning chances are already small, the uncertainty will all be upside, and the kikashi move will be favoured. Thus there is a horizon-like effect without a definite horizon.

MoGoTW resigned after another ten moves.

## 2. A Game Against an Amateur 2d

This game was played between Niall Cardin, a UK 2d now living in California, as White, and the program Fuego, mentioned above. This was a much weaker version of Fuego, as it was running on his home computer.

When I looked at this game, moves 17 to 20 felt entirely natural; they were moves that I would have played myself. Move 21 surprised me. I thought “Black has killed two stones, he should get them off the board now, otherwise White will capture instead”. Niall told me he was also surprised by move 21.



Game 2 (17–21)

But with hindsight, move 21 makes good sense, indeed the sequence 17–21 “clearly wins in the most efficient way” in the words of David Ward. After move 16, White has two groups, but is threatening to connect them. So Black separated them in sente with the sequence 17–20, and then killed the weaker one with 21. I was surprised because I would never have considered 21. After 20, I would have “taken my profit” by capturing two stones. So, although I would have played 17 and 19, I would have deserved no credit for it; Fuego’s sequence is good because it played 17 and 19 for the right reason, as well as continuing with 21. On a 9x9 board, programs are fairly good at reading out to the end of the game, and unlike humans are not distracted by where the last move was.

# CLUBBING AROUND LONDON

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Londoners can play club Go nearly every night of the week if they are prepared to travel around a bit. There are seven local clubs that I visit from time to time, and I thought you might like to know what they are like.

The biggest one is the Central London Go Club, which has a venerable history, still waiting to be written by someone. It started as the London Go Club in the home of our first President John Barrs in the '50s. After moving from pub to pub, and meeting on both Mondays and Fridays, it was overtaken by the London Go Centre in 1974. When that closed in 1979, it was reborn as CLGC, and after several more changes of venue settled in its present location in the premises of the Nippon Club, near Piccadilly Circus. You can play there on a Saturday from 2.00 pm until 9.00 pm, after which some members often betake themselves to a restaurant. On a good day there'll be a couple of dozen players present, including some Japanese.

There is no current Sunday club, and there is an opportunity there for someone to organise one, perhaps at a domestic venue on an ad hoc basis.

On Monday you can play Go at the BBC. No, not that one; the Balham Bowls Club, although even that name is misleading. It's a spacious games-friendly pub, neither crowded nor noisy on a Monday evening, and about five minutes from the Underground. Here meets the South London Go Club. They have a handful of members, and could do with more, especially stronger ones. South London clubs have tended to come and go over the years, so I hope that

this reincarnation thrives.

I sometimes make a trip out to the Billericay club, also on a Monday. They meet in a private house. Like South London, their numbers are few, but they do have some dan players.

When the London Go Centre closed, the North London Go club was founded to serve the many local players. It thrived initially, but like so many clubs has suffered a decline in numbers since the advent of internet go. They meet on Tuesdays in a church room in Hampstead Parish Church, near the Underground station.

I have not yet made the journey to the Wednesday-meeting Twickenham Go Club, which is about as far from where I live as you can get in London. (And that's quite a long way.) The same may be said of the Epsom Club. Also on Wednesday is the mid-day meeting LSE club. London University clubs tend to come and go, so I hope that this one stays. There is reputed to be a dormant club at Imperial College; as with South London, IC clubs have come and gone over the years, so I hope that this one too re-establishes itself.

What I often do on a Wednesday is make the 45 minute journey to the St Albans club, which meets in a pub. There are usually eight or so players, including some dans, the beer is good, and there is no distraction from the thump-thump school of musical composition. There is music later on, when Irish folk musicians arrive at around 9.00 pm. But they don't thump.

On Thursday meets my own club, Wanstead. Like St Albans, we have

about eight players on an average night, including some nominally strong ones. We meet in the Wanstead House Community Centre, where adequate beer and other refreshments are available. We too are five minutes from an Underground station.

Those who prefer a busy pub environment with plenty of thump-thump can play on Friday evenings at the City Go Club, which meets in a pub near Chancery Lane Underground. They'll have ten or so players, including some strong ones.

There seem to be pros and cons to all three types of venue: private homes, public rooms and pubs. Private homes are usually charge-free, but are obviously limited in space, and some newcomers may be shy of visiting; there is unlikely to be much passing trade. Public rooms are clearly better in these respects, but they cost money, which can be a problem in these days of declining club attendance. Games-friendly pubs which don't charge you to be there, and give you somewhere to store equipment, are

fine, but not easy to find. And if you are like me and can't concentrate in a thump-thump environment, finding the right place is even harder. Paris Go players are so fortunate in that playing games in cafés and bars is part of their culture, whereas in London it is frowned on or charged for by many managements.

As far as I know, the only other city with anything like London's variety of Go activity is Cambridge. (Please somebody, prove me wrong.) This article is partly a wake-up call; some of our clubs struggle to survive; use it or lose it. So turn off that computer, and go and play at your club, with a player that you can see, whom you know to be the person that they say they are, who doesn't have the joseki book open on the table, and whose body language you can observe. Personally I never play on the internet. For me, Go is a social activity; I play it because I like meeting the sort of people who play Go.

Which is why I visit seven different go clubs.



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# DAVID WARD'S PROBLEM CORNER—HINTS

Here are the hints for the problems on page 5.

*General tips to solving problems:* first try to reduce eye space from the outside, only when that doesn't work look for placements. If the obvious placement almost works then treat it as a clue—perhaps it will work with a preparatory forcing move.

*Specific tips*

A—You already have one eye, so the solution involves finding a move which threatens to do two things at once, namely make the second eye. The concept of making a single move achieve more than one function is very important; it means the stone is working efficiently.

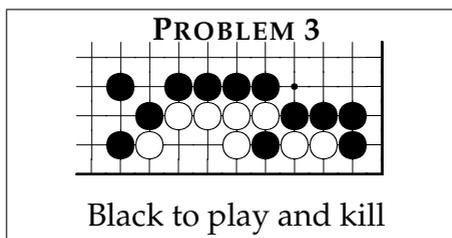
B—Even better here you have an eye and a half, so the solution is to use the aji of the two captured stones to be able to make the second eye. Using captured stones is a key concept in Go. Often kyu players are unaware that until 'captured' stones are removed from the board they still have a role to play.

C—The obvious try fails, but there is a slight non-intuitive defect in White's shape, which to me demonstrates something of the beauty of the game.

D—a cryptic clue here—if you can summon yourself to think back to Iain Duncan Smith's acceptance speech as leader of the Conservative Party and replace "man" with "move" it might get you started.

P.S. "I never guess. It is a shocking habit—destructive to the logical faculty"—more Holmes.

The solutions are on page 41.



# BGA WEBSITE CHANGES

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Pat<sup>1</sup> suggested that I write this article, as I keep mentioning various website changes and he didn't think he knew everything that had happened in the last 15 months or so. (I've chosen December 2009 as the start date, since this is when the front page had its first major revamp since May 2008.)

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A few simple rules ... limitless possibilities

Go is one of the world's great strategy board games and originated over 3000 years ago in China. It is part of popular culture today in Japan, China and Korea, and known as Igo, Weiqi or Baduk in these countries.

Go is a game for two players with just a few simple rules that is fun for all ages. You start with an empty board and then place pieces alternately, vying to map out more territory. However, if you overstretch, your pieces can be captured and taken off the board.

Go has a simple handicapping system that allows level play between players of widely different strengths and Go's deep strategy means that it has still not been mastered by computers, unlike other board games! Go Go provides almost limitless possibilities.

Find out some more

Play Go face to face Play Internet Go

We're a voluntary organisation promoting Go in the UK. We

- help introduce Go to young people
- support the formation and development of clubs
- support and run tournaments throughout the UK and on-line
- run the British Championship and select representatives for international events
- provide teaching events and seminars around the country
- produce a bi-monthly newsletter and a quarterly printed journal
- provide discounts on Go books and equipment to members
- enable subscriptions to the American Go Association weekly email newsletter and
- administer ratings and award Dan diplomas.

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Next Council meeting:  
9th April 2011  
Most recent Journal 154:  
Winter 2010-11  
Journal 156 copy date:

www.britgo.org

Most of you probably aren't aware, or don't care, that we've been using Drupal as our Content Management System for the style and all the pages on our site since April 2007, moving to our current hosting service in December 2010. There are about 3,000 items (effectively pages) of

information on our site that are managed by Drupal, excluding images and other kinds of files such as BGJ back numbers, and of these some 1,000 have been modified to a greater or lesser extent in this 15 months (172 this February alone)! Luckily for the editors, many of these changes have

<sup>1</sup>Your humble Editor.

been cosmetic.

Over this period we've been making more use of Drupal, so we've been able to make some of these changes without too much effort. In fact the front page has only really small changes infrequently now, whereas it was updated often previously to keep it looking fresh and up to date.

I focus on the front page because this is the main entry point to our site and the revamp in December 2009 was designed to improve both the appearance of this page and also its usability for what we regard as the three main kinds of users—you (our members), those who just want to find where to play or buy sets and people who know nothing about the game at all.

The main body of the page now features simple information about Go and also a summary of what the BGA is about, together with some action buttons and how to follow the BGA's activities.

The right hand side shows some pictures to interest newcomers with appropriate links and contains some slowly changing information, such as next Council meeting and BGJ/Newsletter copy dates.

The menu items at the top are expected to be the main ways into the site for you. What they do has been significantly changed under the covers.

## Clubs

The **Find a Club** link still goes to the UK map. But underneath this, technically, each club has a separate page that the Club Secretary can change, to ensure that the details are as up to date as possible. (There have

been lots of club amendments as a result of this conversion exercise.)

The **Clubs List** itself looks a little different, now not including the full details, but with clickable links to the details and to a Google map of the meeting location. It also shows the date it was last updated, so you can have some confidence in the information it provides. (The **Site updates** page also shows which Club pages have changed.)

## News

News is the main area that's changed. The most recent six News items are highlighted on the left hand side of the front page underneath **News** with links to the full article. The News link at the top of the page takes you into a list of the latest news items. However, you don't even have to go to our website to get the latest information—all the main browsers will poll our RSS feed on a regular basis to download the latest news to your computer automatically. Click on the RSS feed icon at the bottom of the front page to go to our feed page and subscribe there! (Details vary by browser.)

News	2010 onwards	Last 12 months News by Type	Last 12 months Tournaments	News by Type/Date
Articles (2009 and before)	UK Results	Foreign Results	Other News	Site Updates 2008-9
UK Book Review Service	16/02/2011 - 17:07	18/02/2011 - 17:39	Announcement	
UK Book Review Service	14/02/2011 - 22:21	19/02/2011 - 22:21	Foreign Tournament Report	
UK Book Review Service	13/02/2011 - 16:47	19/02/2011 - 16:48	UK Tournament Report	
UK Book Review Service	15/02/2011 - 16:42	19/02/2011 - 16:42	UK Tournament Report	
UK Book Review Service	10/02/2011 - 18:23	10/02/2011 - 18:23	Announcement	
UK Book Review Service	09/02/2011 - 19:10	06/03/2011 - 19:19	UK Tournament Report	
UK Book Review Service	08/02/2011 - 22:06	28/02/2011 - 22:06	Announcement	
UK Book Review Service	27/02/2011 - 11:04	27/02/2011 - 11:06	Foreign Tournament Report	
UK Book Review Service	22/02/2011 - 22:08	24/02/2011 - 22:09	UK Tournament Report	

The list of News items allows you to sort anything we've published since January 2010 and view them by type,

title, date order etc. So, you've got great flexibility in finding and looking at our news. For example, you may be only interested in Tournament Results, so click on **Tournament Results** and you get just those for the last 12 months plus links to the various Online Leagues and previous years' results.

Obviously not everything we post to our website is News, so we've provided a list of updates which you can access via the **Last site update** link underneath the **News** items on the front page. The dates on the **News**, **Last site update** and **Tournament Calendar** links show when these pages were last updated.

Finally, if you're already looking at our Facebook group then our News feed automatically appears there too!

## Ratings

The **Ratings** list continues to be updated on a daily basis, triggered by updates to the EGD system, however the processing has been rewritten to speed it up and make it simpler. We no longer maintain separate graph pages as this seems unnecessary—we now link to the EGD versions.

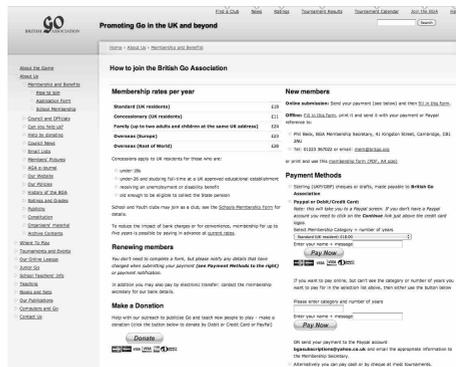
## Tournament Calendar

This is one area of the website that hasn't changed!

## Membership

The **Join the BGA** link and buttons are new and go directly to a new membership application and renewal page. This gives you all the details you need to join, full details of payment methods etc and, more importantly, direct links to make this process as easy as possible without

having a full online membership system.



For example, if you just want to renew your membership and your details haven't changed then select the appropriate membership category from the drop-down list, enter your name and click on the **Pay Now** button and you can pay online using a Debit or Credit Card via Paypal (you don't need a Paypal account and we don't store any of your card details). If your details have changed you can still do this, but don't forget in addition to send your updates (by email to the Membership Secretary<sup>2</sup> [Phil Beck] if you want to).

If you're joining for the first time there's now an online form to fill in, which is automatically sent by email to Phil Beck, so you don't have to print or post anything unless you want to pay by cheque.

## Help

We've added a **Help** link to the top right of every page, so that if you can't work out what to do to find anything there's some direction here. Why don't you try it, as it contains some

<sup>2</sup>mem@britgo.org

other ways of finding information you won't be aware of?

### Navigation

We've spent quite a bit of time trying to reorganise the navigation menus on the left hand side of all our pages to group items better and make the sections a bit more understandable, especially for people new to the game or us. Do you think we've succeeded? If not, what would you recommend?

### Teaching

We've added a new section providing much more information on how to improve, what facilities and equipment we can provide and what is available elsewhere.

We've also included a new section for School Teachers.

### Books and Sets

Obviously this has been dramatically revamped now that we don't have a Bookselling service, just directing members to Pentangle to receive a 15% discount. We now only show some examples of sets and have a new section which includes a copy of all Book reviews that have appeared in the BGJ in the last 10 years. The list of suppliers has also been cleaned up a bit to remove some duff links etc.

Reviewers for new books are required. Please contact Pat Ridley (BGJ Editor)<sup>3</sup> for more details.

### British Go Journal

All issues are now online in PDF format, 12 months after they are initially produced. Further creation of individual articles, games etc. in a better online format is outstanding. Volunteers anyone?

### Online Leagues

The leagues mini-site has had numerous changes to improve usability and some necessary to support the Individual League that's new for 2011.

In addition the League news items are now published at the bottom left of the main site's front page

### Some Boring Stuff

Each page now has two links so that you can easily create a printer-friendly and a PDF version of each page—quite a nice little feature!

A complete set of our Policies is now online, so that you can see now how we control various things. It gives you, amongst other things, guidance on what we can pay for when you'd like a strong player to teach at your club. Why don't you look it up—it's the **Our Policies** link in the **About Us** section?

Whilst you're in this Section why don't you look at **Council News**? It shows the agendas for our meetings and summarises the discussions and actions.

What was the Organisers' Handbook has had a major revision and is now in two sections - Clubs Handbook and Tournament Organisers' Handbook. Click on the **Organisers' Material** link to see them.

Finally, we've produced some documentation about the website itself, which should help new contributors and also maintainers—really boring, but hopefully useful.

**Phew, that's all. I hope next year is a bit quieter!!!**

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<sup>3</sup>journal@britgo.org

# SOFTWARE REVIEW—THE PATH OF GO

David Carter-Hitchin

dch888@gmail.com



Microsoft Research has recently developed Go-playing software<sup>1</sup>, which was released last December to run on the Xbox 360 games console. I downloaded it out of interest. It's polished but the AI engine is very weak—it looks to be about 15 kyu! It will appeal to children though, and anything which promotes Go is a good thing, particularly when big names like Microsoft put their name behind something. Shame about the AI though, really. The 'story mode' does a reasonable (but not perfect) job of teaching the rules; for example it was asking me where to play to make a live group (by making eyes), without explaining the principle of two eyes, or the suicide rule.

Missing and very easy to add: Joseki dictionary and problems. Considering all the free stuff out there to play and learn Go, this is good for kids who know of no alternatives. However, since it appears to be only available via the Microsoft marketplace, this

requires an internet connection, so I imagine anyone who can download this can probably log onto to the Internet and use KGS, look at free Go problems, read Sensei's Library site<sup>2</sup>, look at free online joseki dictionaries, etc.

Scores (out of 10):

- Promotion of Go using a medium that will reach out to millions: 10
- Go AI: 3
- Interface: 7 (a bit clunky in places, i.e. viewing the board can only be at right angles).
- Tutor: 6 ( I didn't play through it all, but it looked OK, though not in the order I would teach things).

Overall: 6

Conclusion: don't buy if you're already into Go and have other software and know about Internet resources. Buy if you know nothing about Go and prefer playing board games on the Xbox, otherwise explore the Teaching Room on KGS with a PC/Mac.

Finally, the AI is really a disappointment, since there is a lot of computing power inside an Xbox. Microsoft Research needs to do some.

<sup>1</sup>See [www.i-programmer.info/news/105-artificial-intelligence/1773-microsoft-research-take-on-go.html](http://www.i-programmer.info/news/105-artificial-intelligence/1773-microsoft-research-take-on-go.html) for technical details

<sup>2</sup>[senseis.xmp.net/](http://senseis.xmp.net/)

# GO CLUB CENSUS

Jenny Radcliffe

council-radcliffe@britgo.org

## Introduction

The UK is home to around 75 Go Clubs, of many types and sizes. It seems likely that most Go played in the UK happens at these clubs—and that most recruitment and organised or collective study happens via them, too, as well, of course, as most tournament organisation and so on. We know where and when these clubs meet, and our website has a comprehensive list which individual clubs can now update themselves when changes happen. However, there are many other things we'd like to know, to find out if there is more the BGA could do to support clubs, and perhaps also what clubs would be willing to do to promote the BGA.

So . . . we're asking.

We would appreciate it if everyone who reads this and attends a Go Club would be kind enough to answer these questions—just the first section if it's all you have time for, or both sections if you have a chance. You can email answers to [council-radcliffe@britgo.org](mailto:council-radcliffe@britgo.org), you can fill in the form on the website at [www.britgo.org/clubs/census](http://www.britgo.org/clubs/census), or if you prefer pen and paper, you can write to Jenny Radcliffe, 62 Albert St, Durham, DH1 4RJ. If you attend more than one club, and have the time to answer questions about all of them, we will be extremely grateful! The more information we have, the better we can understand the state of British Go.

## The Questions

1. Which Go Club(s) do you attend?
2. How often do you attend a Go Club?
3. How many people do you expect to see, roughly, at the Go Club sessions you attend?
4. Does (or do) your Go Club(s) do any routine recruitment activities?
5. Does (or do) your Go Club(s) currently have any BGA equipment?
6. Is there any way in which the BGA could assist your Go Club?
7. Are you and the other members of your Go Club aware that it is now possible to join and renew membership of the BGA online, and if so, are you making use of this facility?
8. Please give contact details if you would not mind us contacting you to ask any other questions—and please tell us anything else you think we should have asked about!

## Supplementary Questions

We would very much appreciate it if people who have time could answer these supplementary questions.

1. If your Go Club meets in a public space, do you get asked questions about Go, and how do you respond?
2. How often does your Go Club get new players (whether experienced players who are new to the club, or novice players)?
3. What, if any, recruitment activities does your Go Club carry out?
4. Does your Go Club do any social activities together (e.g. Christmas parties, etc.)?
5. We have asked how many people you see at an average Club session—but do you know roughly how many people attend the club as regulars in total?
6. Does your club have a library (of its own books or belonging to members) and/or make use of books?
7. If your club meets in a pub or late in the evening, do you have any provision for youth players being able to get a game?
8. Do you personally play online, or only at a club?
9. Is there anything you could and would like to do for British Go and/or the BGA?

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- Reviews of the best games.
- Sensations!
- The real names of the top players!

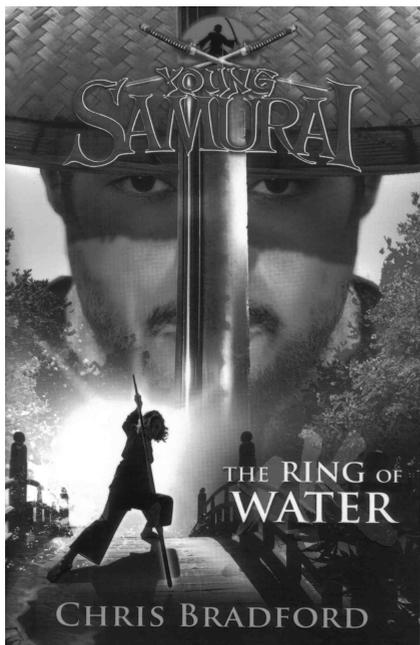
We have nearly ten experts, posting the news and making almost daily updates.

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# BOOK REVIEW—YOUNG SAMURAI: THE RING OF WATER

Tony Atkins

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“The Ring of Water” is the fifth book in the Young Samurai series of books for teenagers. They are written by Chris Bradford. Chris is a martial arts expert living on the South Downs; you may have seen him doing demonstrations at Japanese culture days.

The Young Samurai series follows the fortunes of Jack Fletcher, a young English lad who is stranded in Japan at the start of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. After being wrecked in a storm, his ship is attacked by ninja who kill his father and narrowly miss killing Jack too. He is brought to recovery by a samurai lord who enrolls Jack into his samurai training school, so that Jack can survive in Japan.

At this point the series becomes a bit like Harry Potter, with swords not wands, and kimono not cloaks. It has similar levels of violence, with real injuries and even deaths. Like Harry, Jack is picked upon by the school bully, yet makes some good friends who share his adventures as the evil ninja tries to steal his father’s valuable navigator’s log book.

Jack continues his training through the first three “The Way of” books (and a novelette): “The Way of the Warrior”, “... the Sword”, “... the Dragon” (and “... Fire”) before civil war changes Japan and leaves him as an outcast.

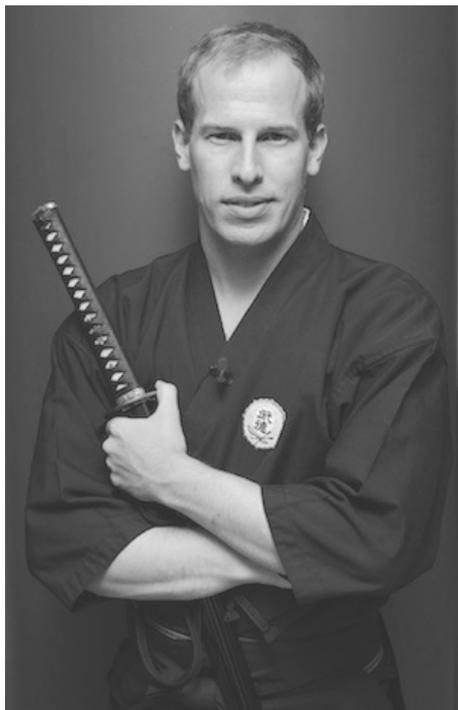
However in the fourth book, “The Ring of Earth”, Jack starts on a long journey to get to Nagasaki and a possible boat back to England. At the start of this, the fifth, book we find he has been attacked and robbed of his possessions and, with the help of two new friends, Ronin and Hana, he attempts to get them back.

In so doing he visits Nara and sees the giant Buddha statue there. However they are captured by a Lord Sanada, who is such a big Go enthusiast that his house is decorated black and white.

Although Jack has never played the game of Go before, he is given the morning to learn the rules from Ronin and then to apply his samurai battle and mind training to winning a four-stone game to earn the freedom of himself and his friends.

The book runs through the rules of Go for the non-player; however one or two badly-constructed sentences make some things a little unclear. Also

Chris translates “te” as “liberty”, both in the context of intersections and of free points next to a stone, which is confusing for Go players if not for beginners.



**Chris Bradford - author and martial arts expert**

As the game progresses we learn a little of the good and bad etiquette for playing, for example not rattling your stones and how to hold the stones, and also how the game ends with pass stones being given like in current BGA rules!

I will not spoil the outcome of the game in case you want to read the

book, but nevertheless Jack survives to fight on and continue his journey in “The Ring of Fire”, out later in August 2011.

The books are well written and contain enough back-story that you can probably understand and enjoy the fifth book without reading the first four. They are ripping yarns of the old tradition, and once you pick them up you can not put them down. I managed to track down the first four and the novelette at a nearby public library and, with three visits over a very busy fortnight, managed to borrow and read them all. I enjoyed them so much, I was delighted when Chris offered to send the BGA a review copy, which I duly accepted and read within five hours of it arriving.

Both the book and the [youngsamurai.com](http://youngsamurai.com) web site promote Go-playing through links to the BGA. The book has a two-page appendix about the game, including the history of the game, and five interesting facts about things like the Atom Bomb Game. We have added links from our BGA home page to two new pages: one for those who have not read the book to find out more about it, and the second for those who have read it and want to find out more about Go, where and how to play it, and more background to the five facts.

Anyway I recommend the series and “The Ring of Water” to teenagers both young and old. It was published in paperback on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2011 by Puffin Books (ISBN 978-0-141-33254-3) RRP £6.99.

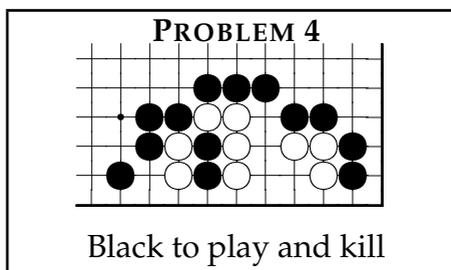
## ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements in the BGJ are £100 per page for black and white.

Contact the Advertising Manager [advertising@britgo.org](mailto:advertising@britgo.org) for the full advertising rates, terms and conditions, or any other advertising related promotion with the BGA.

Privately placed small ads, not for profit, are free.

Discounts are available for a series.



The `.sgf` files for problems and games printed in this journal appear on

[www.britgo.org/bgj/current](http://www.britgo.org/bgj/current)

All the `.sgf` files, and the answers to the problems set in the last issue appear on the BGA website at

[www.britgo.org/bgj/issue154](http://www.britgo.org/bgj/issue154)

# THE BGA BOOKSHOP

Toby Manning

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In previous issues of the BGJ, tribute has been paid to Gerry Mills, who ran the Bookshop for 15 years. During this time the annual turnover steadily increased, peaking at around £20,000 in 2001 and stabilising at over £12,000 in 2010. At the age of 80 Gerry has given up the job, and Council has carefully considered its future.

We believe that the scale of the enterprise is such that it needs to be put on a professional basis, and Council has been talking to the BGA's importers and wholesalers, Pentangle Puzzles and Games. As a result I am pleased to say that the BGA has appointed Pentangle as its preferred supplier, and in exchange Pentangle is offering a 15% discount on its normal retail price to BGA members. Some members in the north-west will have met Tim Dixon of Pentangle, who is a double-figure kyu player and would "like to get better".

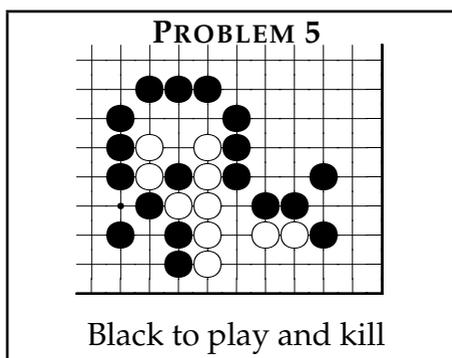
We have set up a direct link from our web-site to that of Pentangle

(see under "Books and Sets"). When you use this link, your discount will be applied when you go to "check-out" on the Pentangle web-site. Alternatively you can use the discount code "BGAMEMBER". Purchases can also be made by post or 'phone.

Pentangle accepts credit and debit card payments, Paypal payments and cheques.

Despite the discount, I am afraid that members will see a general increase in prices. This is only partially due to the change in supply arrangements; books and sets are seeing price increases, just as are elements of the rest of the economy, and as nearly all items are imported, the recent fall in the value of sterling gives an additional and unwanted push in the wrong direction.

Nevertheless we still believe that these arrangements provide good value, and we hope members will support Pentangle.



# GO BOOKS I GAVE TO MY SISTER

Tony Atkins

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My older sister does not play Go, but for the last few years I have tried to give her a book that contains Go in it, preferably a novel, as a Christmas present.

As she had already read "The Girl who Played Go" by Shan Sa, "Memoirs of a Geisha" by Arthur Golden and "Mr Nice" by Howard Marx, the first such book was "PopCo" by Scarlett Thomas. This is a book about a toy company where they all play Go and the main character has a cat called Atari. It must have gone down well as my sister reported back that she had gone on to read all the other books that Scarlett had written (that don't include Go).

The following year I confused her a little by giving her "The Stone Monkey" by Jeffery Deaver. She was more than half way through this American thriller before realising the "Wei-Chi" they were referring to was Go! The book is about illegal Chinese immigrants and involves the detective learning Go from a Chinese colleague, as well as having Go quotes on the section heading pages.

For last year I wasn't able to get hold of a copy of "She Murdered me with Science" by David Boop or "Windy City" by Sara Paretsky, and wasn't sure if she had read "Shibumi" by Trevanian, so I got her a dictionary! It was the Oxford Dictionary of English third edition in fact. Although the list

price for this wonderful new edition (used from 2011 on "Countdown") is nearly forty pounds, luckily you could get it for about half this on the Internet.

It is a Go book for, on page 748, entry 2 for "Go" is:

Go - noun (mass noun) a Japanese board game of territorial possession and capture.

- ORIGIN late 19th Cent.: Japanese, literally 'small stone', also the name of the game.

Now many Japanese words have entered English, like pagoda and shogun, so I flicked through the dictionary and found that dan, kyu and one of the meanings of san have entries. I was surprised to find entries for all of dame, komi, hamate and sente (though not with their Go meanings). However I was puzzled a little that atari and geta are not in. Words that are close to Go terms that appear are semei (semeai), sagar (sagari), Ishihara test (ishi) and hanepoot (hane). Maybe we should start a campaign to get the Go terms in the fourth edition?

With David Mitchell's "The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet"<sup>1</sup> now out and Robert van Gulik's classic "The Chinese Lake Murders" to track down, not to mention "The Ring of Water"<sup>2</sup>, I should be able to keep the themed presents going for quite a few more years yet.

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<sup>1</sup>See book review in this Journal

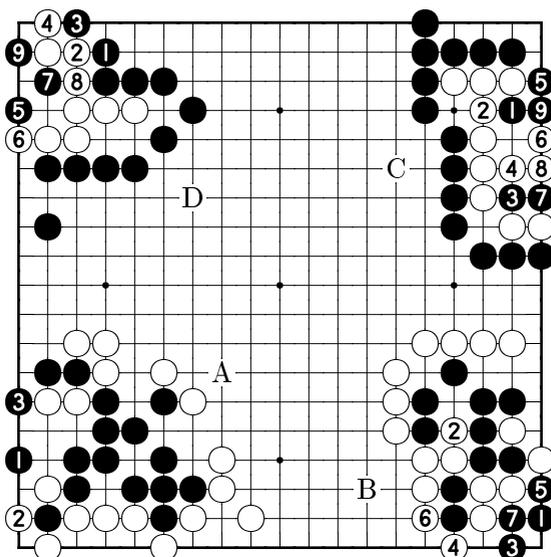
<sup>2</sup>Ditto.

# DAVID WARD'S PROBLEM CORNER - ANSWERS

David Ward

dward1957@msn.com

Here are the solutions to the problems on page 5.



Problem D: in case you are wondering, what Iain Duncan Smith said was “Do not underestimate the determination of a quiet man.”, shortly before resigning the Party leadership. (Biography: “The Quiet Man was leader of the Conservative Party in the UK for a while ... we think ... no-one quite knows who he was or what he did<sup>1</sup>.”)

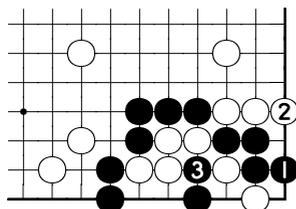
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<sup>1</sup>[www.saidwhat.co.uk/quotes/political/iain.duncan.smith/do\\_not\\_underestimate\\_the\\_determination\\_of\\_12470](http://www.saidwhat.co.uk/quotes/political/iain.duncan.smith/do_not_underestimate_the_determination_of_12470)

# SOLUTIONS TO THE NUMBERED PROBLEMS

The .sgf files for these problems, showing a fuller set of lines, including failures, are to be found at [www.britgo.org/bgj/issue155](http://www.britgo.org/bgj/issue155).

## Solution to Problem 1

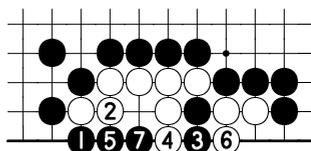


Dia. 1

The empty triangle is the solution. It makes use of the corner to stop white from approaching from the inside. White 2 isn't fast enough and after 3 White is stuck for a move.

If Black places at 3 to start with, then White plays at 2 and a ko ensues.

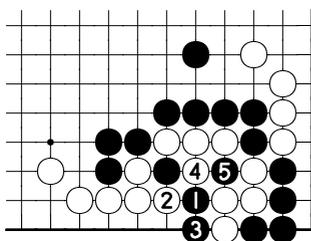
## Solution to Problem 3



Dia. 3

The key for destroying the eyes is the edge atari. If White connects at 2 then drawing out the trapped stone leaves White unable to make eyes. If White takes at 3 instead, then Black plays at 7 and kills. Playing Black 1 at 3 is too early—White plays at 5 and lives. If Black plays 1 at 2 then White captures at 3 and lives.

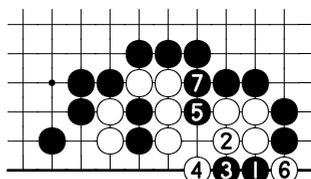
## Solution to Problem 2



Dia. 2

This must be the tesuji as there is nothing White can do to save the four stones. If Black plays at 4 first, then White can give up the three stones and save the corner four. ② is White's strongest reply, which saves the three at least. Anything else loses all seven.

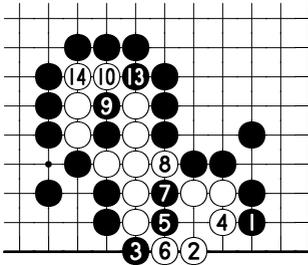
## Solution to Problem 4



Dia. 4

Out of the possible moves, it seems the correct move is this one—death in the hane. White 2 is the strongest reply. White 2 at 3 just allows Black to play at 5. Anyway Black still gets to play at 5, and there is no way for White to make a second eye.

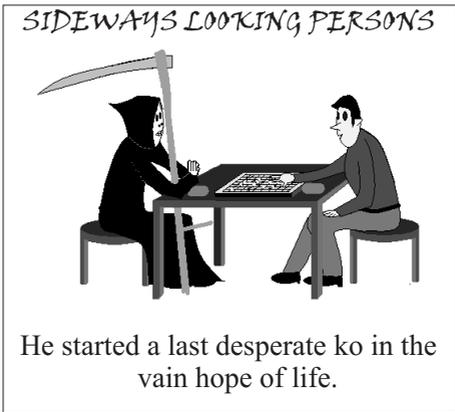
### Solution to Problem 5



Dia. 5

Black descending at 1 is the strongest attack. White 2 often makes eye

shape, but White starts running out of liberties as the fight progresses. Black cleverly sacrifices two stones in the top eye and then plays inside with 11 at 9. If White 12 captures 11, then he soon runs out liberties and either fails to make an eye or gets immediately captured. If White plays 2 at 4, then Black plays 3 at 7 and a similar position occurs, except that white can play in the corner; however there is no second eye there. If Black starts with 1 at 5, then a similar shape can occur, but without the liberty shortage and White keeps the top eye.



## EXPLANATION OF JAPANESE TERMS

Where space permits less common terms are explained in footnotes.  
If no explanation is provided then take a look at:

[www.britgo.org/general/definitions](http://www.britgo.org/general/definitions)

[www.britgo.org/bgj/glossary.html](http://www.britgo.org/bgj/glossary.html)

or search [senseis.xmp.net/](http://senseis.xmp.net/).

Please let the Editor know if the term is still not found.  
One of the experts can then write an article to explain it ☺

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## COPY DATE FOR THE NEXT JOURNAL

The copy date for the Summer issue of the Journal is **20<sup>th</sup> May**.

Please send your contributions to [journal@britgo.org](mailto:journal@britgo.org).

The Editor will be glad to discuss the suitability of any material you may have in mind.

## COLLECTING GO VIII—GO POSTCARDS—CONTINUED

Tony Atkins

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Collecting Go VII in BGI 154 showed Go postcards from Japan. In this Journal we see a postcard from Korea and a set from Germany.

As well as the cards showing Jiri Keller's drawings and paintings of famous professionals (see part II), the only other commercial set I know about is that issued by German equipment company, Hebsacker Verlag, available at [www.hebsacker-verlag.de](http://www.hebsacker-verlag.de). This set of ten cards features classic covers of the German Go Federation's magazine (DGoZ) from 2004 to 2007. The designs feature pictures of ornaments, modern and oriental designs and reworks of old masters (for example, Caravaggio).



It is also possible to find odd cards for sale in general shops in the Orient. I have one such Japanese card and, thanks to T Mark Hall, this classic from Korea showing “young Scholars who enjoy ‘baduk’ (go) game”.





Go stones and a die dug up at Dejima and on display in the museum of the reconstructed Dejima trading post (the setting for "The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet").